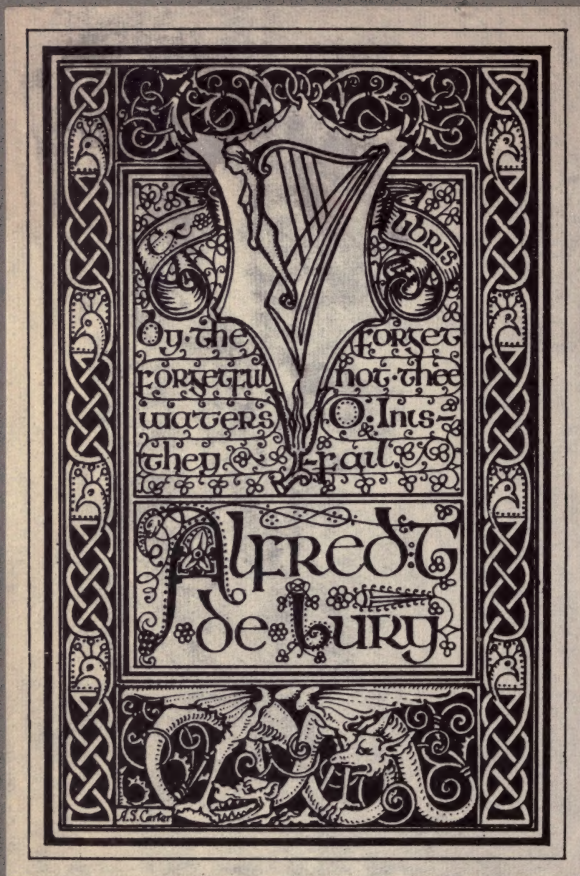


Symons, Arthur  
A book of twenty songs.

PR

5527

B6





Book of Twenty Songs  
by Arthur Symons.

London :

M. Dent & Co.

1905.





A Book of Twenty Songs.





A Book of Twenty Songs  
by Arthur Symons.

London :  
J. M. Dent & Co.  
1905.



PR  
5527  
B6

633858  
25.4.56





To Rhoda.





- I. Sing-Song: p. 9.
- II. To a Sea-Gull: p. 10.
- III. Song: p. 12.
- IV. V. Two Love-Songs: p. 13.
- VI. A Song of Poltescoe Valley: p. 16.
- VII. For a Picture of Rossetti: p. 17.
- VIII. By Loe Pool: p. 19.
- IX. Song: p. 20.
- X. Stratford-on-Avon: p. 21.
- XI. The Rope-Maker: p. 22.
- XII. The Turning Dervish: p. 23.
- XIII. Hymn to Fire: p. 25.
- XIV. Sea Twilight: p. 26.
- XV. Song of the Sirens: p. 27.
- XVI. Autumn: p. 29.

XVII. Winter in Spring : p. 30.

XVIII. Easter Meditation : p. 31.

XIX. Night : p. 32.

XX. A Song against Love : p. 33.



## I. Sing-Song.

To live and die under a roof  
Drives the brood of thoughts aloof ;  
To walk by night under the sky  
Lets the birds of thought fly ;  
Thoughts that may not fly abroad  
Rot like lilies in the road ;  
But the thoughts that fly too far  
May singe their wings against a star. ✓

## II. To a Sea-Gull.

Bird of the fierce delight,  
Brother of foam, as white  
And winged as foam is,  
Wheeling again from flight  
To some unfooted height,  
Where your blithe home is ;

Bird of the wind and spray,  
Crying by night and day  
Sorrowful laughter,  
How shall man's thought survey  
Your will or your wings' way,  
Or follow after ?

What pride is man's ? and why,  
Angel of air, should I  
Joy to be human ?



You walk and swim and fly,  
Laugh like a man and cry  
Like any woman.

I would your spirit were mine  
When your wings dip and shine,  
Smoothly advancing ;  
I drink a breathless wine  
Of speed in your divine  
Aerial dancing.

### III. Song.

O why is it that a curl  
Or the eyelash of a girl,  
Or a ribbon from her hair,  
Or the glove she used to wear,  
Weighed with all a man has done,  
With a thought or with a throne,  
Drops the balance like a stone?

Antony was king of men,  
Cleopatra was a queen,  
And for Cleopatra he  
Flings away his sovereignty.  
Yet as well can Kate or Nan  
Find, as Cleopatra can,  
Antony in any man.

#### IV. Two Love-Songs.

I do not know if your eyes are green or  
grey

Or if there are other eyes brighter than  
they ;

They have looked in my eyes ; when they look  
in my eyes I can see

One thing, and a thing to be surely the death  
of me.

If I had been born a blind man without  
sight,

That sorrow would never have set this wrong  
thing right ;

When I touched your hand I would feel, and  
no need to see,

The one same thing, and a thing the death of  
me.



Only when I am asleep I am easy in mind,  
And my sleep is gone, and a thing I cannot  
find ;  
I am wishing that I could sleep both day and  
night  
In a bed where I should not toss from left to  
right.

V.

O woman of my love, I am walking with you on  
the sand,

And the moon's white on the sand and the  
foam's white in the sea ;

And I am thinking my own thoughts, and your  
hand is on my hand,

And your heart thinks by my side, and it's not  
thinking of me.

O woman of my love, the world is narrow and  
wide,

And I wonder which is the lonelier of us two?

You are thinking of one who is near to your  
heart, and far from your side ;

I am thinking my own thoughts, and they are  
all thoughts of you.

## VI. A Song of Poltescoe Valley.

Gold and blue of a sunset sky,  
Bees that buzz with a sleepy tune,  
A lowing cow and a cricket's cry,  
Swallows flying across the moon.

Swallows flying across the moon,  
The trees darken, the fields grow white ;  
Day is over, and night comes soon :  
The wings are all gone into the night.



## VII. For a Picture of Rossetti.

Smoke of battle lifts and lies  
Sullen in her smouldering eyes,  
Where are seen  
Captive bales of merchandise.

Here are shudderings of spears,  
Webs of ambush, nets of fears, ✓  
Here have been  
Prisons, and a place of tears.

In her hair have souls been caught ;  
Here are snared the strength of thought,  
Pride of craft ;  
Here desire has come to nought.

Have not her lips kissed again  
Lips that kissed for love's sake, when

Her lips laughed  
Like a passing-bell for men?

This is what Rossetti says  
In the crisis of a face.

### VIII. By Loe Pool.

The pool glitters, the fishes leap in the sun  
With joyous fins, and dive in the pool again ;  
I see the corn in sheaves, and the harvestmen,  
And the cows coming down to the water one by  
one.

Dragon-flies mailed in lapis and malachite  
Flash through the bending reeds and blaze on  
the pool ;  
Seaward, where trees cluster, the shadow is  
cool ;  
I hear a sighing, where the sea is, out of sight ;  
It is noontide, and the fishes leap in the pool.



## IX. Song.

Dear love, let's not put away  
Love against a rainy day ;  
You are careful, and would hoard  
Some of that which can't be stored ;  
For, like roses which are born  
To die between a night and morn,  
Being once plucked, being once worn,  
So the rose of love's delight  
Only lasts a day or night ;  
But what matter, so there be  
Each morn new roses on the tree ?

## X. Stratford-on-Avon.

Bright leaves and the pale grass turn grey ;  
Now, sudden as a thought, one swan  
Moves on the water and is gone ;  
The broad and liberal flood of day  
Ebbs to thin twilight, and night soon  
Out of the wells of dark fills up  
The valley like a brimming cup  
With silver waters of the moon.

This is the ardent hour of peace ;  
The Avon like a mirror lies  
Under the pale November skies ;  
The shaken moon and the still trees  
Trouble the water not a whit,  
And, secret as a hidden word,  
One note is spoken by one bird  
As if the water answered it.

## XI. The Rope-Maker.

I weave the strands of the grey rope,  
I weave with sorrow, I weave with hope,  
I weave in youth, love, and regret,  
I weave life into the net.

When I was a child the care began,  
And now my child shall be a man ;  
When I am old, and my fingers shake,  
There'll be nets to mend, and more nets to  
make.

And life's a weary and heavy thing,  
And there's no rest in the evening ;  
And long or light though the labour be,  
It's a life to the net, and nets to the sea.



## XII. The Turning Dervish.

Stars in the heavens turn,  
I worship like a star,  
And in its footsteps learn  
Where peace and wisdom are.

Man crawls as a worm crawls ;  
Till dust with dust he lies,  
A crooked line he scrawls  
Between the earth and skies.

Yet God, having ordained  
The course of star and sun,  
No creature hath constrained  
A meaner course to run.

I, by his lesson taught,  
Imaging his design,

Have diligently wrought  
Motion to be divine.

I turn until my sense,  
Dizzied with waves of air,  
Spins to a point intense,  
And spires and centres there.

There, motionless in speed,  
I drink that flaming peace,  
Which in the heavens doth feed  
The stars with bright increase.

Some spirit in me doth move  
Through ways of light untrod,  
Till, with excessive love,  
I drown, and am in God.

### XIII. Hymn to Fire.

Son of God and man,  
When the world began,  
First-born of love and hate,  
Where was thy hid state?  
Thou bliss by God denied,  
Till the human pride  
Snatched thee, and brought down  
Heaven's breath for his own.

Spectre of the rose,  
When thy red heart grows  
Fierce, and thy delight  
Makes a morn of night,  
Do the stars grow pale,  
Lest thy leapings scale  
Heaven, and thou again  
Harness them in thy train?

#### XIV. Sea Twilight.

The sea, a pale blue crystal cup,  
With pale water was brimmed up ;  
And there was seen, on either hand,  
Liquid sky and shadowy sand.

The loud and bright and burning day,  
Charred to ashes, ebbd away ;  
The listening twilight only heard  
Water whispering one word.



## XV. Song of the Sirens.

Our breasts are cold, salt are our kisses,  
Your blood shall whiten in our sea-blisses ;  
A man's desire is a flame of fire,  
But chill as water is our desire,  
Chill as water that sucks in  
A drowning man's despairing chin  
With a little kissing noise ;  
And like the water's voice our voice.

Our hands are colder than your lovers',  
Colder than pearls that the sea covers :  
Are a girl's hands as white as pearls ?  
Take the hands of the sea-girls,  
And come with us to the under-sands ;  
We will hold in our cold hands  
Flaming heart and burning head,  
And put thought and love to bed.

We are the last desires ; we have waited,  
Till, by all things mortal sated,  
And by dreams deceived, the scorn  
Of every foolish virgin morn,  
You, awakening at last,  
Drunken, beggared of the past,  
In the last lust of despair  
Tangle your souls into our hair.

## XVI. Autumn.

There is so little wind at all,  
The last leaves cling, and do not fall  
From the bare branches' ends ; I sit  
Under a tree and gaze at it,  
A slender web against the sky,  
Where a small grey cloud goes by ;  
I feel a speechless happiness  
Creep to me out of quietness.


What is it in the earth, the air,  
The smell of autumn, or the rare  
And half reluctant harmonies  
The mist weaves out of silken skies,  
What is it shuts my brain, and brings  
These sleepy dim awakenings,  
Till I and all things seem to be  
Kin and companion to a tree ?

## XVII. Winter in Spring.

Winter is over, and the ache of the year  
Quieted into rest ;  
The torn boughs heal, and time of the leaf is near,  
And the time of the nest.

The poor man shivers less by his little hearth,  
He will warm his hands in the sun ;  
He thinks there may be friendliness in the earth  
Now the winter is done.

Winter is over, I see the gentle and strange  
And irresistible Spring :  
Where is it I carry winter, that I feel no change  
In anything ?



### XVIII. Easter Meditation.

Learn wisdom, this is wisdom, cry  
The teachers; and the teachers die.  
What should it profit me were mine  
The wisdom of the Antonine,  
Or Plato's? What is it to me  
If that be wisdom or this be?  
I know the same unfaded world,  
A pebble from the brook, is hurled  
Forth from Time's sling through endless ways,  
And I shall have no part or place  
Save in the pebble's senseless speed.  
Wherein shall wisdom to my need  
Minister? how shall wisdom save  
From the last folly of the grave?



## XIX. Night.

The night's held breath,  
And the stars' steady eyes :  
Is it sleep, is it death,  
In the earth, in the skies ?

In my heart of hope,  
In my restless will,  
There is that should not stop  
Though the earth stood still,

Though the heavens shook aghast,  
As the frost shakes a tree,  
And a strong wind cast  
The stars in the sea.

## XX. A Song against Love.

There is a thing in the world that has been  
since the world began :

The hatred of man for woman, the hatred of  
woman for man.

When shall this thing be ended? When love  
ends, hatred ends,

For love is a chain between foes, and love is a  
sword between friends.

Shall there never be love without hatred? Not  
since the world began,

Until man teach honour to woman, and woman  
teach pity to man.

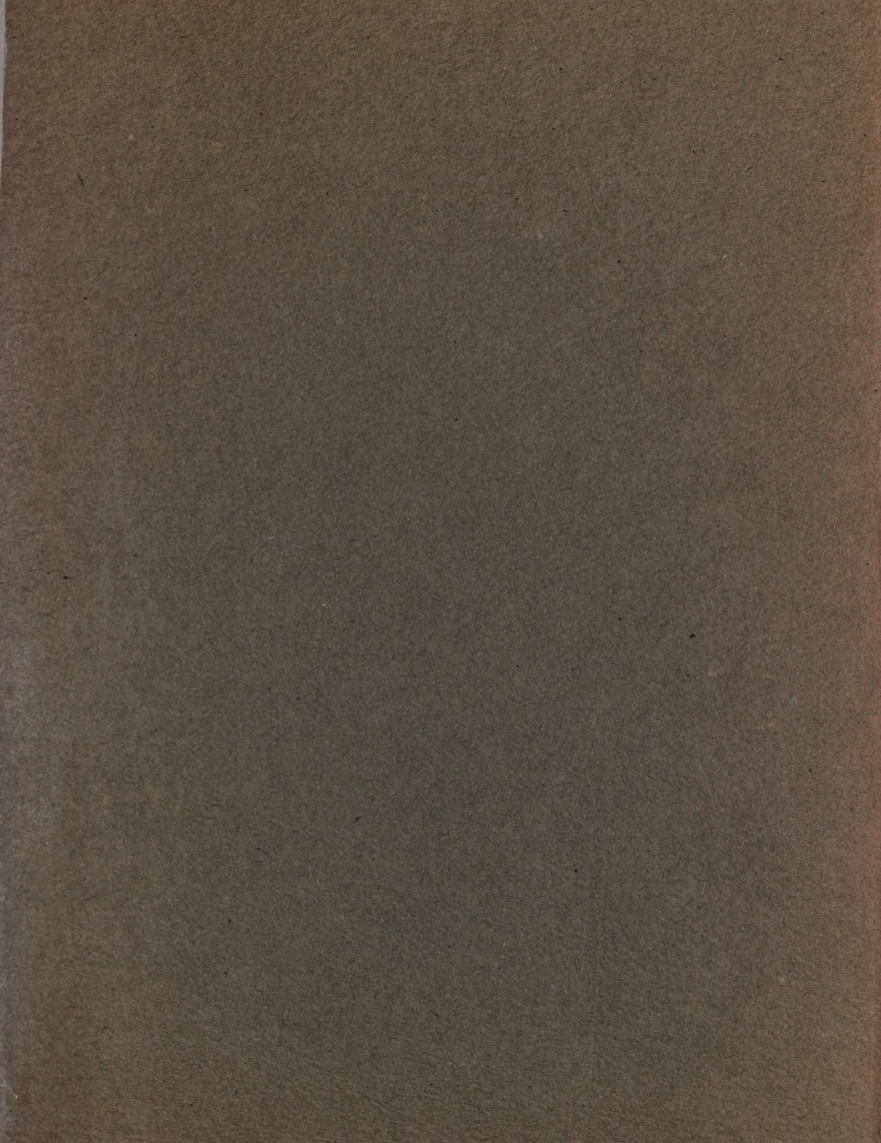
O that a man might live his life for a little tide  
Without this rage in his heart, and without this  
foe at his side !

He could eat and sleep and be merry and forget,  
he could live well enough,  
Were it not for this thing that remembers and  
hates, and that hurts and is love.  
But peace has not been in the world since love  
and the world began,  
For the man remembers the woman, and the  
woman remembers the man.

PRINTED BY  
TURNBULL AND SPEARS,  
EDINBURGH











PR  
5527  
B6

Symons, Arthur  
A book of twenty songs

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

---

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

---

